GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3420
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2000
FREEZE ON COMMERCIALISATION OF GENETIC ENGINEERING
SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose a ten year freeze on commercialisation of genetic engineering in food and farming in the country till a bio-safety and regulatory mechanism is put in place;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN)

(a), (b) & (c): Sound and effect regulatory mechanism is already in place in the country. The Indian Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 followed by Notification on `Rules for the manufacture, use, import, export and storage of hazardous micro-organisms, genetically engineered organisms or cell` issued by Ministry of Environment & Forest on 5th December, 1989 captures the legal frame work of handling Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in food and farming.The Biosafety Guidelines have been formulated by the Department of Biotechnology and the `Recombinant DNA Safety Guidelines` were published in 1990.The `Revised Guidelines for Research in transgenic Plants & Guidelines for Toxicity and Allergenicity Evaluation of Transgenic Seeds, Plants and Plant Parts` were published in August 1998 and they were further modified in September, 1999. All GM food and GM plants are evaluated for environmental safety including human and animal food safety on case by case basis. Only after biosafety evaluation, GM food or GM plants shall be allowed to be commercialised.